

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

4 84 Bro

327

327

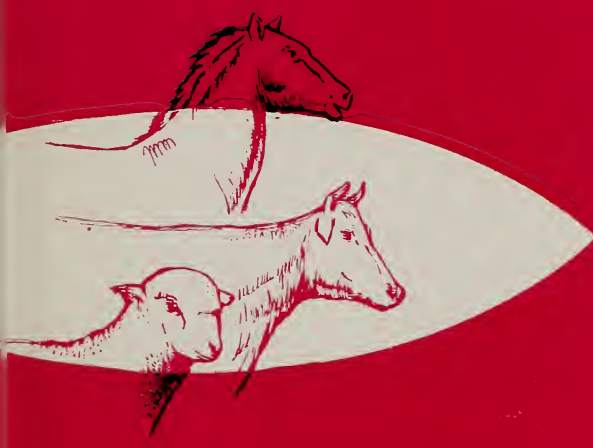
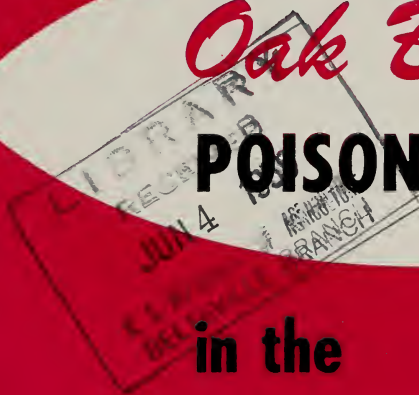
REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from

Oak Brush

POISONING

in the
Western States



PA-327

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from

Oak Brush POISONING

in the Western States

Two kinds of oak brush may poison cattle that feed on them: Shinnery oak,¹ or shinnery, common in the Southwest; and scrub oak,² common in the central part of the Western States.

Cattle losses from oak poisoning are heaviest early in the growing season. This is so because: (1) Oak brush often starts growth before other range plants, making it

the only forage available; (2) The plants are most poisonous in the budding and leafing stages. As the leaves mature, oak brush decreases in toxicity.

An animal is less likely to become poisoned if it eats oak brush with other forage. It can have up to 40 percent of oak brush in the total ration without suffering any harmful effects.

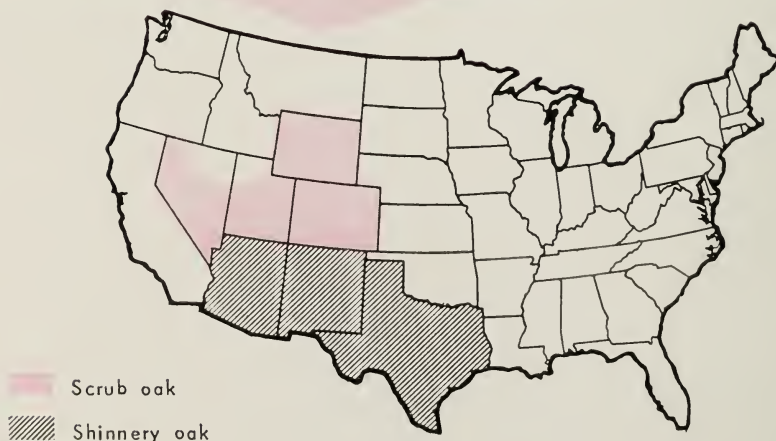
Where It Grows

Shinnery oak is a low, spreading shrub. It grows in sandy areas, and is primarily found in southeastern Texas. Scrub oak is a shrub or

small tree. It grows in dense thickets on foothills and mountain slopes, and can be found up to an elevation of 8,000 feet.

¹ *Quercus havardii* and others. ² *Q. gambellii* and others.

OAK BRUSH DISTRIBUTION





TN-15

Oak brush produces small acorns; its leaves are leathery and have wavy margins. Shinnery oak grows 1 to 6 feet high; scrub oak, up to 20 feet high. Oak brush is a woody perennial and belongs to the Fagaceae or beech family.

How It Affects Livestock

Death from oak brush poisoning may occur in a few days to 2 weeks after the cattle first show symptoms.

Symptoms of oak brush poisoning

1. Animals appear gaunt, and have a tucked-up appearance
2. Constipation, frequently followed by profuse diarrhea
3. Weakness
4. Tendency to remain near water
5. Reluctance to follow the herd
6. Emaciation
7. Mucus in droppings
8. Dark-colored urine
9. Animals collapse

How To Reduce Livestock Losses

Livestock losses from oak brush poisoning can be reduced by conservative grazing and proper seasonal use of shinnery and scrub oak ranges.

In shinnery areas of the Southwest, livestock owners should reserve pastures with the least amount of oak brush for early spring grazing. The use of supplemental feed will further help reduce losses.

In scrub oak areas, animals

should be kept off oak brush ranges until forage becomes available.

At first signs of poisoning, remove the affected animals from the herd and give them adequate feed and water. In some cases, the use of a mild laxative, such as oil, may be beneficial.

Eradication of oak brush is usually not practicable. The herbicide 2,4-D has been found to be effective in some shinnery areas.

Where To Obtain More Information

You can obtain more information on oak brush poisoning by getting in touch with your county agricultural agent or by writing to your State agricultural experiment station or to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Consult your local

veterinarian if you have any questions regarding affected animals. *Note:* The map on page 2 shows areas where most livestock poisoning has been reported. It is possible that oak brush grows in other areas.

Know Poisonous Plants • Reduce Livestock Losses

Prepared by the Animal Disease and Parasite Research Division, Agricultural Research Service. Acknowledgment is made to the staff of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

Washington, D. C.

☆ 421082 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1958

Issued April 1958